

Unofficial

BENTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL CORPORATION
 405 South Grant Avenue
 Fowler, Indiana 47944

Regular Meeting
 Board of School Trustees
 December 14, 2020
 Benton Central Jr./Sr. High School Auditorium

Board members present were:

	<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Gabe Widmer	X	
Edward Schroeder	X	
Robert Sondgeroth	X (Via Zoom)	
Jennifer Barce	X	
Chad Tolen	X	

Also present were administrators, faculty, staff, and patrons.

Call to Order, Recognize Quorum

President Edward Schroeder called the regular meeting to order at 7:02 p.m., and recognized a quorum. The Board, Interim Superintendent, administrators, faculty, staff and patrons stood for the pledge of allegiance and took a moment of silence. Mr. Schroeder indicated there was one emergency addition to the agenda. He stated he would like to add E.5 Mr. Wittenauer consulting with Mr. Van Der Aa for the month of January. Mr. Wittenauer had an addition of C.8 about the January 2 hour delay days for professional development. The board approved the amended agenda on a motion by Jennifer Barce and a second by Chad Tolen. The motion carried.

Audience to Visitors

None

Routine Matters

The board approved the Minutes of the Executive Session of November 2, 2020, minutes of the TA Meeting of November 9, 2020, minutes of the Public Hearing of November 12, 2020, minutes of the Regular meeting of November 16, 2020, minutes of the Executive Session of November 30, 2020 and minutes of the Special meeting of December 5, 2020 on a motion by Chad Tolen and a second by Jennifer Barce. The motion carried.

Mrs. Albertson presented the vouchers to the board for approval. Mrs. Albertson did not have any particular vouchers to point out this month. She indicated she didn't have any board members email her any questions. Mrs. Albertson asked the board members if they had any questions. There being no questions from the board, Mrs. Albertson asked the board to approve the vouchers as presented. Gabe Widmer moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce, to approve accounts payable vouchers totaling \$536,455.76 and payroll and benefits vouchers of \$1,845,605.86 for a grand total of \$2,382,061.62. The motion carried with Robert Sondgeroth abstaining.

Mr. Wittenauer asked the board to appoint Tracy Albertson as the Treasurer

for 2021. Jennifer Barce moved, seconded by Gabe Widmer to appoint Tracy Albertson as School Corporation Treasurer for 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Wittenauer asked the board to appoint Candace Armstrong of Armstrong Law Offices, LLC as corporation attorney for 2021. Gabe Widmer moved, seconded by Chad Tolen to appoint Candace Armstrong of Armstrong Law Offices, LLC as corporation attorney for 2021. Motion carried.

Mr. Wittenauer spoke to the remaining board members that at their January meeting they would need to select the new president, vice president, and secretary. He suggested that they start thinking about this so that they have an idea who that will be, before the January meeting.

Communications

Mr. Kevin Pritchett presented about the building trades program working on a tiny home. He talked about the shutdown last March and not being able to finish their project. Mr. Pritchett stated this has opened the doors for the students to be more a part of the specifications of the home. This allows the students to build the cabinets, chose the layout, and the finishes of the home. The students can take more ownership of this project. Mr. Pritchett stated that the height of the tiny home is taller than the door they have at the shop and he is looking into putting in a bigger door. He talked about how they don't have a buyer but have a potential buyer. Mr. Wittenauer asked if they have advertised the tiny home yet. Mr. Pritchett said no, he would like to wait until they are a little farther along on the project first. He stated if they don't have a buyer they would try to sell it at the FFA auction if they can. Mr. Wittenauer asked about what the cost would be when they put it up for sale. Mr. Pritchett said it would be their cost plus ten percent. Mr. Pritchett stated that they plan to use the old bleachers from the gym to make the countertops and that they would make the cabinets themselves. Mr. Wittenauer stated that if this works it maybe something they continue to do next year. Mr. Pritchett stats that it is really opening the doors because it gives him more time to work with the kids and the homes that they have been building have been way too big for the size of classes he has had. Mr. Pritchett stated that this has also allowed the student to do other things like, build a garage in Fowler, pour a driveway, make paper towel holders for the school, and potentially work on the football press box. Mr. Wittenauer stated that one of the detriments is the amount of time they have to drive to and from a job site. Mr. Pritchett talked about how building a tiny home affords him more instructional time with his students. He doesn't think it is going to be hard to sale. Mr. Tolen asked if it would be possible to get pictures to put on the Benton Central Facebook page. Mr. Pritchett plans on putting pictures on the Benton Central Facebook page, he has been taking pictures of the project from the beginning.

Mr. Wittenauer acknowledged the following donations:

Benton Central

- Benton Central FFA received the following donation for Thanksgiving Baskets
 - \$50.00 from Paul & Carrie Starr
 - \$50.00 from Anne Harman
 - \$100.00 from Jud & Jennifer Barce
 - \$40.00 from Christian Eric Butzke & Kristina Carlson
 - \$300.00 from Pritchett Construction
- \$200.00 from an anonymous donator to BC CAAP

- \$50.00 from an anonymous donator to BC CAAP
- \$120.00 of groceries for five Prairie Crossing Families form Drug Plastics & Glass co.
- \$500.00 from JoAnn Brouillette to FFA in Memory of Pat Scherer
- \$200.00 from Benton County Farm Bureau Inc. to FFA
- \$130.00 from three anonymous donators to BC CAAP
- \$50.00 from Joyce Meyer to BC Athletics
- \$130.00 from Kenneth Greenberg to BC Athletics

Mr. Wittenauer gave an update on the 2 hour delay schedule. He stated that the dates for January will be January 11, 2021 and January 27, 2021. He stated that this has been a tough decision that he has had to make over the four months that he has been here. He apologized to parents for having us start and stop, but he had to make that decision. He stated that we are going to get through the rest of this semester virtually and that we will have to make a decision on what we are going to do when we get back from break. He apologized for the starting and stopping but his decision has always been based on what is best for our kids and staff.

Mr. Wittenauer talked about the exemplary behavior report for the Boys Cross Country team. He stated that he almost mentions this every month about our athletic teams being a class act. Mr. Wittenauer wanted to take a moment to recognize the team and coaches for their exemplary behavior.

Mr. Wittenauer recognized Ben Anderson, a former student, for the selection to me a member of the Silver Anniversary Stat Basketball Team. Ben could not attend the meeting.

Mr. Wittenauer gave recognition to retirees: Lynda Steep, Joyce Noble and Kim Kitterman. He stated that he had the pleasure of working with them the last time he was here. Mr. Wittenauer wanted to take a moment to thank them for their dedication to the Benton Community School Corporation.

Mr. Wittenauer gave recognition to the school board members that are retiring. Mr. Wittenauer presented Gabe Widmer, Edward Schroeder and Robert Sondgeroth a plaque for their years of service to the Benton Community School Corporation as School Board Members.

Mr. Sondgeroth gave the following speech: "Mr. President, fellow board members and community friends, I have had an amazing career in the field of education. It has been a privilege to serve Benton County and the surrounding counties as a teacher, administrator, school board member and district 4 director of the Indiana School Board Association. I am proud to be a part of this community and have lived up to my sworn oath of serving as a board member to the best of my ability. Benton County is a wonderful place to live and to raise a family."

Old Business

None

New Business

Mr. Wittenauer presented the revised staff report to the board. Jennifer Barce moved, seconded by Chad Tolen to approve the following staff report as presented:

Leaves

- FFCRA leave for the following employees:
 - Janet Harman - December 2, 2020 through December 11, 2020;
 - Cathy Hayes - November 10, 2020 through November 16, 2020;
 - Jacqueline Dowell - December 4, 2020 through December 17, 2020;
 - Jennifer Hasser - November 30, 2020 through December 11, 2020;
 - Hannah Harden - December 1, 2020 through December 2, 2020;
 - Renee Deno - November 30, 2020 through December 7, 2020;
 - Betsy Loy - November 19, 2020 through November 30, 2020;
 - Renee Bunch - November 19, 2020 through November 25, 2020;
 - Mayroni Cortes - November 17, 2020 through November 24, 2020;
 - Katherine Girardier - November 17, 2020 through November 25, 2020;
 - Megan Hawk - November 17, 2020 through November 24, 2020;
 - Jeanette Pack - November 13, 2020 through November 25, 2020;
 - Aaron Hasser - November 17, 2020 through November 25, 2020;
 - Esmeralda Luna - November 17, 2020 through November 24, 2020;
 - Kelsey Valdez - November 30, 2020 through December 8, 2020;
 - Sarah Bostian - November 30, 2020 through December 12, 2020;
 - Aimee Glover - November 20, 2020 through December 14, 2020;
 - Kim Kitterman - November 16, 2020 through November 19, 2020;
 - Dennis Sondgeroth - November 11, 2020 through November 22, 2020;
 - Misty Hahn - November 9, 2020 through November 20, 2020;
 - Jeana Rayman - November 12, 2020 through November 23, 2020;
 - Danielle Payne - November 18, 2020 through November 27, 2020;
 - Janet Harman - November 12, 2020 through November 27, 2020;
 - Carrie Gephart - November 10, 2020 through November 22, 2020;
 - Gail Green - November 16, 2020 through November 20, 2020;
 - Taylor Ellis - November 12, 2020 through November 19, 2020;
 - Laura Dwenger - November 23, 2020 through November 24, 2020;
 - Aimee Glover - November 10, 2020 through November 13, 2020;
 - Michel Grant-Snethen - November 12, 2020 through November 27, 2020;
 - Barbara Happ - November 10, 2020 through November 23, 2020;
 - Gary Happ - November 16, 2020 through November 19, 2020;
 - Ann Roberts - November 12, 2020 through November 24, 2020;
 - Keisha Stapleton - November 3, 2020 through November 4, 2020;
 - Diane Womack - November 19, 2020 through December 2, 2020;
 - Lauren Muthig - November 30, 2020 through November 30, 2020;
 - Amanda Whitaker - December 2, 2020 through December 16, 2020;
 - Vickie Fehland - December 7, 2020 through December 8, 2020;
 - Kelly Yadon - December 4, 2020 through December 5, 2020
- FMLA leave for Makayla Pauley beginning November 23, 2020 through December 10, 2020;
- FMLA leave for Ashley Silver approximately March 15, 2020 through May 26, 2020;

Retirements

- Kim Kitterman as a Special Education Aide at Benton Central effective December 31, 2020;

Resignations

- Jon Vernon as Head Varsity Baseball Coach effective November 10, 2020;
- Trina Martin as Library/Media Aide for Prairie Crossing Elementary effective November 30, 2020;

Employment

Corporation

- James Tully as Bus Technician effective January 4, 2020

Benton Central

- Transfer for Susan Milligan from the 3.5 hour Cafeteria position at Benton Central to a Substitute Cafeteria position effective December 14, 2020;
- Sarah Minnich as an Office Assistant effective December 2, 2020;
- Bryan Thompson as Science Olympiad Assistant effective with the 2020-2021 school year;
- Bill Cummings as Head Varsity Softball Coach effective with the 2020-2021 school year;
- James Warf as Junior High Athletic Coordinator effective with the 2020-2021 school year;
- See attached updated ECA schedule;

Prairie Crossing Elementary

- Cheryl Reynolds as a part time 1:1 aide effective October 12, 2020;
- Carrie Smith as a 5.75 hour cafeteria employee effective January 4, 2020;
- Ashley Gaskins as a Speech-Language Therapy Assistance effective January 4, 2020;
- Transfer of Mary Shultz to 29 hour Library aide effective December 14, 2020;

Mr. Wittenauer asked the board to approve the appointment of Kim Fitch to the Oxford Public Library Board of Trustees. Chad Tolen moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce to approve Kim Fitch to the Oxford Public Library Board of Trustees. Motion carried.

Mr. Wittenauer asked the board to consider approval of the Benton Central LED lighting project. He stated that he researched it and there will be a saving between 5-15%, but it will be an ongoing savings. He stated that we had \$75,000.00 budgeted for this project and it's only going to cost us \$27,000.00. Mr. Wittenauer recommended that when we can save money on a project like this we do it. Mr. Wittenauer asked for the board to approve the LED Lighting project at the Benton Central Jr./Sr. High school. Gabe Wimder moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce to approve the LED Lighting project at Benton Central. Motion carried.

Mr. Schroeder asked that the board approve Mr. Wittenauer to be hired as consultant for Mr. Scott Van Der Aa for the month of January, for a fee of \$1,000.00. Mr. Wittenauer introduced Mr. Van Der Aa our new Superintendent and stated he will start on January 1, 2021. Mr. Wittenauer is happy to report that he and Scott have gotten off to a good start with the transition. He stated that he feels it is going to be an easy transition and that he fits in well with our community. Mr. Schroeder asked for a motion to approve Mr. Wittenauer as a consultant for Mr. Van Der Aa for the month of January, for a fee of \$1,000.00. Mr. Tolen asked if this was a retainer fee. Mr. Wittenauer answers, yes. Chad Tolen moved, seconded by Jennifer Barce. Motion carried.

Mr. Wittenauer stated his appreciation for the board, community, and his staff over the last four and half months. He has enjoyed coming back to be involved in the school corporation. He felt that we still have challenges ahead. He wanted to thank the board for allowing him to come and help out.

Mr. Schroeder asked if anyone had any comments. Mr. Tolen commented that

in the last several months there have been several rumors and false information going around. The referendum that passed was for the board to set the rate up to .31, it was not guaranteed to be .31, it is set each year. He thinks some people thought that if it was set at .15 that it was for eight years, but it is set each year. He stated that it will bring in 1.95 million that will plug the hole of where we are at currently. He stated he knows that could change year to year. He stated that currently we have four million dollars in the rainy day fund. Next year there are expenses and that there are variables but if we are short we have a rainy day fund to fill it. He stated that we were easy on the taxpayers this year, being a pandemic year they wanted to keep the rate as low as possible and still cover expenses. He stated the teachers and all staff got a 3% pay raise this year, in the middle of a pandemic. He thinks Mr. Wittenauer checked and this was the highest of any of the schools in the area. He stated that it was good that everyone got a raise and that we didn't have to go as hard on the taxpayers as we needed to. He stated that we still have challenges in the future with enrollment, as Mr. Wittenauer said hopefully we don't keep losing enrollment, but as of now finically we are stable. He talked about the comments about cutting teachers and programs once the referendum passed and even before has never been discussed with this board to cut teachers or programs everything is in place. He stated that finically that maybe the state will have to take us over is not true at all. He stated that currently our competent friends in Washington DC are trying to push another COVID bill and in that there is 85 billion for education, if anything we may end up getting more money.

Mr. Schroeder stated that he agrees with Mr. Tolen and thinks there was a lot of miss understanding about the .15 and the .31. Mr. Schroeder stated that he thinks that the dispute was all over the 2 million dollars difference between the two, and it was all about the money.

Mr. Sondgeroth gave a farewell address, Children first and keep Jesus in your heart.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m. The next regular board meeting will be held at 7:00 p.m. Monday, January 11, 2021, at the Administration Office.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tiffany Bushman, Recording Secretary

President

Member

Vice-President

Member

Secretary